

**Litchfield Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2023 ~ 7:00 p.m.
Litchfield Firehouse**

Call to Order: Chairman Erich Marriott called the regular meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Erich Marriott, Patty Dauten, Elliot Fuessenich, Sam Olmstead, Matt Dyer, Jennine Lupo (alternate). Chairman Marriott appointed Ms Lupo to be seated as a regular voting member.

Members Absent: Tom Terhaar, Pat Donovan

Others Present: First Selectman Denise Raap, Finance Director Amaechi Obi, Town Treasurer Alan Landau, Selectman Jeffrey Zullo, Barbara Putnam, Chair of Town Facilities Review Committee

Introduction of New Board Members: Jennine Lupo introduced herself and was welcomed by the Board.

Approval of the 11/13/23 Regular Meeting Minutes: **Motion:** S. Olmstead moved and E. Fuessenich seconded a motion to approve the 11/13/23 meeting minutes. S. Olmstead asked to change the last sentence under Budget Schedule Review for 2024-2025 to "S. Olmstead said he thought the Region 20's Finance Subcommittee approves the budget...". In voting on the motion with the change, all voted aye except M. Dyer, who abstained because of absence, and the motion carried.

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of Board of Finance

Motion: S. Olmstead moved to nominate E. Marriott for Chairman, and M. Dyer seconded.

Motion: S. Olmstead moved to close nominations, and P. Dauten seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Vote: Voting on the motion to elect E. Marriott as Chairman, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion: P. Dauten moved to nominate S. Olmstead for Vice Chairman, and M. Dyer seconded. M. Dyer asked if there was a party affiliation requirement in place here and was told there was not.

Motion: E. Fuessenich moved to close nominations, and M. Dyer seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Vote: Voting on the motion to elect S. Olmstead as Vice Chairman, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Comment: B. Putnam asked if there was a Zoom link to the meeting and was told there was not.

J. Zullo said there will be a transfer coming for the EV charger contract. They are waiting for an updated proposal that was due today. Funding sources are the DEEP grant of \$138,000 (we will pay invoices and DEEP will grant the payout), and the Eversource \$100,000 rebate for installation. There may be additional funds needed of about \$20,000 or \$30,000, but they hope less, as Public Works will do some trenching work to save money. We also have \$10,000 in ARPA funding to use. J. Zullo thought the source of the transfer for the \$138,000 and additional funds needed could be from Capital Nonrecurring or fund balance. A. Obi said there is not enough in Capital Nonrecurring now, but if approved, they would find the money. The total cost should be about \$275,000. After three years of a requirement to make no profit on the charger sales, the Town will begin to see a revenue stream. We will own the chargers and have a maintenance contract, the cost of which will be built into the operating cost. He hopes the Board of Finance can approve this at the first meeting in January to be ready for the Annual Town Meeting near the end of January.

D. Raap asked that the Board of Finance catch up with the Annual Reports and consider mailing the current one out to the public.

Review and Action on Sandy Beach Lease: D. Raap said this lease started in 1998 and expired in March of 2023. We've been working with White Memorial since March of 2022 as well as with the Town of Morris and the Sandy Beach Commission. It's a 25-year renewal. The Board decided to wait until the Board of Selectmen has acted on it. **Motion:** S. Olmstead moved to table action until the January 8th meeting. M. Dyer seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried. This item will be included on the Annual Town Meeting call.

Review and Action of Gift of 12.42 Acres to the Town on Pitch Road: D. Raap reviewed the actions taken to date. The value is \$175,040 and the assessed value is low at \$2,000 because it falls under Public Act 490. All the other land around the Recycling Center is owned by the Town, as it has the potential for being contaminated by the landfill that was closed years ago. Nobody can build on it. **Motion:** P. Dauten moved to accept the gift of 12.42 acres on Pitch Road, and E. Fuessenich seconded. It was clarified that the transfer of this land is effectively done after approval at Town Meeting. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

Review and Action on Frontier Contract and Funding Sources: E. Marriott said the word from J. Morosani is that the contract is still with Legal, so it would be cleaner to bring it back to the January 8th meeting for approval. **Motion:** M. Dyer moved and J. Lupo seconded a motion to table action on this item until the January meeting. All voted aye and the motion passed.

Finance Director's Monthly Report for November: A. Obi began with revenue, explaining highlighted line items. Year to date we have received \$18,748,673 in revenue with \$13,791,633 yet to collect. We are at 57.6%, compared to 56.6% last year. **Motion:** E. Fuessenich moved to accept the November revenue report as presented. P. Dauten seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried. Under expenditures, Mr. Obi went through the highlighted items and summarized total year to date expenditures at \$13,950,611, encumbrances at \$1,496,312 and remaining available budget at \$17,093,383. Percentage used so far is 47%, compared to 48% last year at this time. E. Fuessenich questioned why we have used so much more in fringe benefits, 8101. We are at 62%, compared to 14% last year. Mr. Obi said he would look into it, suspecting the 14% may be wrong. **Motion:** M. Dyer moved to accept the November 2023 expenditure report with the caveat that the Finance Director look into the 2022/23 fringe benefit line item. E. Fuessenich seconded, all voted aye and the motion passed.

Motion: S. Olmstead moved and E. Fuessenich seconded a motion to move Transfer #4 up before Transfer #3 on the agenda. All voted aye and the motion carried.

2. Transfer #4 - \$9,000 for LVA Flood Losses: D. Raap explained the loss of funds to LVA from the September flooding of the building and said for them to bear the cost would be a hardship. The \$9,000 would come from 01-1903-51703 Contingency and go to 01-4201-54125 LVA. **Motion:** E. Fuessenich moved and J. Lupo seconded a motion to approve Transfer #4. Upon question by M. Dyer, D. Raap confirmed the final bill from ServPro, with tax and 10% taken off, is \$5,816.49. Losses of supplies and equipment requested for reimbursement is \$3,183, totaling just under \$9,000. Upon voting, all voted aye and the motion carried.

New Business

a. Financial Transfers

1. Transfer #3 - \$150,000 Architecture Services for Bantam Annex Study: B. Putnam explained the focus of the study as the Bantam Annex building. The Committee interviewed three firms and chose TLB Architecture in Chester, CT. They are familiar with the process that we go through and are strong with public outreach, which she felt was lacking in our last attempts. Programming will include outdoor as well as indoor space and consider the public good in community use. S. Olmstead also spoke about the benefits of a planned

use for the building. He said there is a lot of grant money available now from the Inflation Reduction Act for energy efficient upgrades. Funds would come from the \$250,000 we received from the BOE non-lapsing account, 68-9101-47000, and go to 30-1701-52202 Other Professional Services (Bantam Annex Fund). Jeff Zullo said there never was a study done on this building, and they need a baseline to determine what can be done to bring it up to efficient, stable use in order to get good estimates. The Board of Selectmen has reviewed it and believes it is a reasonable investment. TLB will present several recommended options. S. Olmstead said public engagement is key in order to get a buy-in for recommendations with a price attached. Upon question by J. Lupo, participation on the survey mailer was about 30% – 40%. E. Marriott said that in the end the Town Meeting will decide this. **Motion:** S. Olmstead moved and M. Dyer seconded a motion to approve Transfer #3. **Discussion:** After a long discussion about whether the Board of Finance approved the receipt of the non-lapsing money from the BOE, it was agreed that it was approved by inclusion in the budget submitted, and the Annual Budget Meeting approved it. **Vote:** Upon voting, all voted aye and the motion carried.

b. Correspondence: Oliver Wolcott Library report

c. Payment of Bills: None

d. Future Agenda Items: None

Adjournment: **Motion:** S. Olmstead moved to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. and M. Dyer seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Ann Combs, Recording Secretary